

MONTANA TEEN DRIVER CURRICULUM GUIDE

Module 6.4 – Dangerous Emotions - Lesson Plan

Student Objectives:

The student explores how the senses are used while driving. The student develops an understanding of how emotions affect the driving task and ways to manage emotional situations while driving. The student develops an understanding of how temporary and permanent disabilities may affect the driving task and ways to compensate while driving.

The student is expected to describe:

- a) how the senses for touching, hearing, smelling, and seeing are used while driving;
- b) emotions and their effect on driver behavior;
- c) ways to control emotions while driving;
- d) temporary and permanent disabilities that may affect the driving task;
- e) actions drivers can take to compensate for disabilities while driving.

The student describes aggressive behaviors and how driver errors lead to aggressive driving behaviors by the driver and other drivers that can escalate to road rage; evaluates individual anxieties that can lead to aggressive driving; recognizes strategies drivers can adopt to reduce conflict; and describes how to apply anger management techniques to prevent aggressive driving that can lead to road rage.

The student is expected to:

- a) describe aggressive driving behaviors that can lead to road rage;
- b) describe driver errors that can lead to aggressive driving behaviors;
- c) describe an individual's anxieties that can lead to dangerous driving behaviors;
- d) develop strategies to reduce conflicts while driving;
- e) develop and use anger management techniques to prevent aggressive driving and road rage.

Materials Needed:

1. Module 6.4 PowerPoint Presentation
2. Module 6.4 Fact and/or Work Sheets (printed for each student)
3. Module 6.4 Lesson Plan/Teacher Commentary (printed out)

TEACHER COMMENTARY

The following are questions you can ask during the presentation to engage students and have them develop key concepts related to Drowsy Driving.

Representation of the module slides are provided to allow you to connect the materials, data, and questions with the presentation.

Slide 2: Objectives – Dangerous Emotions

Students will understand and be able to explain:

- **Emotions and their effect on driver behavior.**
- **How the senses are used while driving.**
- **Ways to compensate for temporary and permanent disabilities while driving.**
- **Strategies to reduce conflicts while driving.**
- **Aggressive driving that can escalate road rage.**
- **Ways to control emotions and manage anger while driving.**

Objectives – Dangerous Emotions

Students will understand and be able to explain:

- Emotions and their effect on driver behavior
- How the senses are used while driving
- Ways to compensate for temporary and permanent disabilities while driving
- Strategies to reduce conflicts while driving
- Aggressive driving that can escalate road rage
- Ways to control emotions and manage anger while driving

**Slide 3 – Can emotions affect your driving?**

- **Your thoughts, feeling, opinions and character can impact your driving focus and decisions.**
- **Don't drive when you are upset, angry or overly tired.**
- **Make safe choices and always put the safety of yourself and others first.**
-

Every driver is responsible for operating their vehicle in a safe and courteous manner.

61-8-302. Careless driving. (1) A person operating or driving a vehicle on a public highway shall drive it in a careful and prudent manner that does not unduly or unreasonably endanger the life, limb, property, or other rights of a person entitled to the use of the highway.

(2) A person who is convicted of the offense of careless driving is subject to the penalties provided in 61-8-711 or 61-8-716.

61-8-303. Speed Restrictions. a person shall operate a vehicle in a careful and prudent manner and at a reduced rate of speed no greater than is reasonable and prudent under the conditions existing at the point of operation, taking into account the amount and character of traffic, visibility, weather, and roadway conditions.

Can emotions affect your driving?

Slide 4 – Attitudes and Emotions

Worry, concern, envy, sadness, excitement, disappointment, frustration, a new love or a broken heart will affect your driving focus and decisions.

How can you control your emotions while driving?

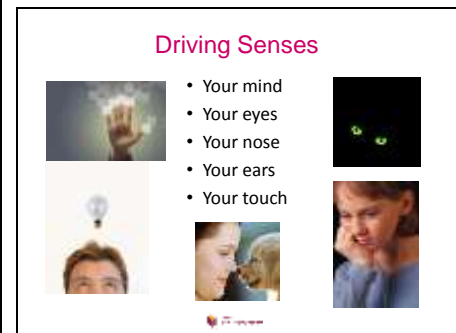
- Recognize the emotion you're dealing with and identify at least two options and alternatives to respond – you have a choice.
- Change your perspective - consider other ways to look at a situation.
- Don't take your frustrations out on other drivers.



Slide 5 – Driving Senses

How are the senses of touch, hearing, smelling and seeing are used while driving?

What other senses are important while driving?



Slide 6 – Effects of Disabilities on Driving

How do injuries and disabilities affect the driving task?

What actions can drivers take to compensate for disabilities while driving?

Disabilities may be temporary or permanent and medications may be a consideration.

Evaluate the effects on:

- ability to manipulate controls;
- ability to see and collect important information, including ability to stay on task and refrain from distractions;
- ability to respond correctly and timely to instructor directions; and
- other operational issues that can reasonably be determined to put vehicle occupants and roadway users at undue risk.



Some individuals with severe and profound physical disabilities may be accommodated to drive safely using high tech solutions in specially equipped vehicles, but not all. An advanced rehabilitation center providing driver services is likely to be necessary.

Slide 7 – Driving Decisions

Evaluate and decide before each drive if you are ready for the weather and road conditions.

Are you calm, focused and alert?

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Driver Decisions



Slide 8 – What is aggressive driving?

Consider speeding – is it aggressive?

Aggressive driving includes:

- Speeding – too fast for conditions
- Excessive lane changing
- Failing to signal
- Passing on the shoulder
- Following too closely

What is aggressive driving?



Slide 9 – What leads to aggressive driving?

Aggression can be sparked by errors and trivial events.

-- “He stole my parking space”

-- “She cut me off”

It is often the cumulative result of a series of stressors and troubles in the driver’s life.

It’s often “the straw that broke the camel's back.”

When you make a driving error, hit your forehead with the palm of your hand to communicate “I made a mistake.” Be ready to apologize.

What leads to aggressive driving?



Slide 10 – How do emotions impact safe driving?

Discuss, then click slide for answers.

NHTSA definition: an individual commits a combination of moving traffic offenses so as to endanger other persons or property.

The "aggressive driver" fails to consider the human element involved. The anonymity of being behind the wheel gives aggressive drivers a false sense of control and power; therefore, they seldom take into account the consequences of their actions.

How do emotions impact safe driving?

- Driver or passengers are angry, upset or impatient.
- Aggressions inflamed due to traffic dispute, altercation, or grievance.
- Endangers other drivers, pedestrians and property by:
 - Speeding – too fast for conditions
 - Excessive lane changing
 - Failing to signal
 - Passing on the shoulder



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Slide 11 – Aggressive Driving vs. Road Rage

Aggressive driving creates unsafe situations. Anger can lead to rage if a driver or passenger feels they have been violated or their safety has been threatened. Road rage includes using a vehicle as a weapon with the intent to harm.

Aggressive Driving vs. Road Rage

There is a difference between aggressive driving and road rage.

- Aggressive driving is a *traffic* offense.
- Road rage is a *criminal* offense.



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Slide 12 – What is road rage?

Road rage is defined as "an assault with a motor vehicle or other dangerous weapon by the operator or passenger(s) of another motor vehicle or an assault precipitated by an incident that occurred on a roadway." Source: <http://www.nhtsa.gov/Aggressive>

Drivers that escalate minor driving situations into full-blown road rage have negative attitudes about others. Some may have Intermittent Explosive Disorder (IED) which is marked by episodes of unwarranted anger and impulsive aggressiveness leading to attacks on others and their property. (Visit Mayo Clinic's web resources for more information.)

What is road rage?

Assault with a motor vehicle that occurs as a direct result of a disagreement between drivers



Intermittent explosive disorder (IED) is marked by episodes of unwarranted anger, impulsive aggressiveness and road rage.

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Slide 13 – Student Activity

Ask students to work in groups of two or three and generate a list of actions that annoy, frustrate or make other drivers angry.

Discuss why they came up with their list.

What would they do if they were a passenger in car with someone who was angry, emotional and driving erratically, etc.?

How would they change the outcome of that situation?

List of Aggressive actions:

- Passing traffic on the right shoulder of the road
- Blocking traffic by driving slow in the outside lane
- Failing to yield to faster traffic by moving to the right
- Pressuring others by tailgating
- Passing then cutting back in sharply in front of the other driver
- Not yielding to pedestrians and bicyclists
- Not coming to a complete stop at stop signs
- Running red lights
- Driving through a yellow light
- Failing to follow right-of-way rules
- Driving 10 miles below the speed limit when conditions don't warrant slow speeds
- Speeding
- Failing to use turn signals

Student Activity

List actions that annoy, frustrate or make other drivers angry

Small group discussion – 3 minutes

- Identify poor driving habits which can lead to aggression.
- List all the ones you have seen or can imagine.
- What strategies can you use to deal with these situations?



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Slide 14 – Who are the aggressive drivers?

When does annoyance lead to irritation, anger or rage? Watch one of the videos in this module's video folder: Parking Lot Rage or Trunk Monkey. It's normal to feel anger when we think something is wrong but it doesn't justify reckless driving or violence.

Are you an Aggressive Driver? Take the Driver Stress Profile to measure your hostility on the road at the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety Web site <https://www.aaafoundation.org/are-you-aggressive-driver>. The online quiz has questions about Anger, Patience, Competing, and Punishing.

Who are the aggressive drivers?



Consider anger, patience, competing and punishing.



Slide 15 – Golden Rules of the Highway

Expect mistakes and keep a safe following distance. You will need space if something unexpected happens.

Patience is a virtue, especially while driving.

Golden Rules of the Highway

- Obey traffic laws
- Drive courteously
- Show respect for all drivers and other roadway users



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Slide 16 – How to make other drivers angry.

The common thread when drivers get into an altercation is traffic congestion and frustration.

How to make other drivers angry



- Reducing a gap to prevent others from entering your lane.
- Failing to turn off high beams for oncoming drivers.
- Flashing high beams to the driver in front.
- Long blasts of the horn.
- Weaving in and out of traffic lanes at high speed.
- Returning inappropriate gestures to other drivers.
- Failing to signal.

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Slide 17 – The Road Rage Driver

Drivers that escalate minor driving situations into full-blown road rage have negative attitudes about others.

- Want to retaliate against others
- Wants to injure other roadway users
- Has no regard for the feelings and rights of other users
- Believes rage is caused by others
- Does not accept criticism of his own driving behavior
- Disregards the comfort and safety of passengers

For additional information on Road rage and Intermittent Explosive Disorder (IED) visit Mayo Clinic's web resources.

The Road Rage Driver



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Slide 18 – Irrational Actions of the Aggressive Driver**Irrational Actions of the Aggressive Driver**

- Believes the vehicle hides him from other drivers so he is unseen by others.
- Thinks others are out to get her.
- Critical about the other driver's appearance or their vehicle.
- Thoughts of violence against others.
- Believes his driving is not part of the problem.
- Doesn't observe laws she disagrees with.

**Slide 19 – Tragedy on Highway 93**

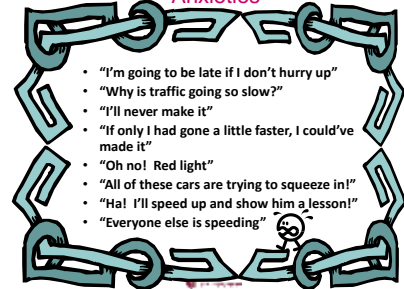
A distraught, suicidal teen driving at night, texting and speeding causes a tragic crash. She is now serving a 15-year sentence for the double homicide.

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/montana-teen-purposely-crash-car-kill-mother-son/story?id=14268311>

Tragedy on Highway 93**Slide 20 – Anxieties**

Any driver can enter a situation with variable amounts of anxiety which can negatively influence driver behavior and lead to dangerous driving.

Give yourself time, leave early and account for road conditions so you will arrive safely.

Anxieties

- "I'm going to be late if I don't hurry up"
- "Why is traffic going so slow?"
- "I'll never make it"
- "If only I had gone a little faster, I could've made it"
- "Oh no! Red light"
- "All of these cars are trying to squeeze in!"
- "Ha! I'll speed up and show him a lesson!"
- "Everyone else is speeding"

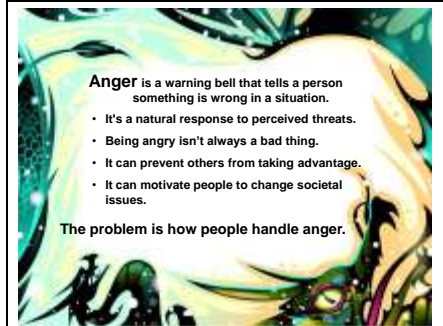
Slide 21 – Anger

Anger is a feeling of displeasure or hostility which could lead to aggressive driving.

Anger is also a normal, healthy emotion, just like any other feeling such as sadness, disappointment or frustration. The body responds to anger, with muscle tension or an increase in heart rate and blood pressure as the body releases adrenaline — the fight-or-flight hormone. What a person thinks about anger can acknowledge that it's OK to be frustrated, or, on the other end, think that the world is out to get them or that friends "never" do what you ask.

- Anger** is a warning bell that tells a person something is wrong in a situation.
- It's a natural response to perceived threats.
 - Being angry isn't always a bad thing.
 - It can prevent others from taking advantage.
 - It can motivate people to change societal issues.

The problem is how people handle anger.



Slide 22 - Anger Management

The American Psychological Association has strategies to control anger:
<http://www.apa.org/topics/anger/control.aspx>.

Closing your eyes to visualize a calm relaxing place could work in a parking lot, but not while driving. State your concerns and needs without hurting others.

“Serenity now” – Frank Costanza in Seinfeld, 1997

**Anger Management**

If you are driving and feel anxious or angry:

- Breathe deeply
- Slowly repeat calming words such as “relax,” “let it go,” “take it easy”
- Stay off the road until calmed down
- Remember everyone makes mistakes and wants to be treated fairly
- Change the way you think – practice patience and forgiveness

Out-of-control anger is a learned behavior that needs to be unlearned.

**Slide 23 – Reduce conflict to avoid confrontation**

Ignore gestures and name calling – refuse to return them

Be tolerant and forgiving – the other driver may be having a bad day

Reduce conflict to avoid confrontation

- Don't respond
- Avoid eye contact with hostile drivers
- Get out of the way but do not acknowledge the other driver
- Don't up the ante
- Swallow your pride
- Choose the road “less traveled”

**Slide 24 – Avoid confrontation to reduce conflict**

Do not get out of your vehicle – lock the doors

Avoid confrontation to reduce conflict

- If an angry driver pursues you, do not go home and do not get out of your car
- Drive to a police station, convenience store, or other location where you can get help and there will be witnesses
- Call 911 if you're concerned for your safety

**Slide 25 – Don't speed or you'll be next**

Leave plenty of time and drive attentively. Speeding is the most common aggressive driving violation.

Keep at or below the posted speed limits – signs show the maximum safe speed in optimum conditions.



Slide 26-27 – Standards and Benchmarks

Montana Driver Education and Training
Standards and Benchmarks

- 1. Laws and Highway System**
- 1.1. know the laws outlined in the Montana Driver's manual;
 - 1.2. understand the laws outlined in the Montana Driver's Manual; and
 - 1.3. consistently demonstrate knowledge and understanding by responsible adherence to highway transportation system traffic laws and control devices.
- 2. Responsibility**
- 2.1. recognize the importance of making safe and responsible decisions for owning and operating a motor vehicle;
 - 2.2. demonstrate the ability to make appropriate decisions while operating a motor vehicle;
 - 2.3. consistently display respect for other users of the highway transportation system; and
 - 2.4. develop positive habits and attitudes for responsible driving.
- 3. Visual Skills**
- 3.1. know proper visual skills for operating a motor vehicle;
 - 3.2. communicate and explain proper visual skills for operating a motor vehicle;
 - 3.3. demonstrate the use of proper visual skills for operating a motor vehicle; and
 - 3.4. develop habits and attitudes with regard to proper visual skills.
- 4. Vehicle Control**
- 4.1. demonstrate smooth, safe and efficient operation of a motor vehicle; and
 - 4.2. develop positive habits and attitudes relative to safe, efficient and smooth vehicle operation.



(continued on next slide)